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SUBJECT: LOS MONJES ISLANDS

REFERENCE: CARACAS 8728

1. IN SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBOFFS YESTERDAY COLOMBIAN CHARGE AND FONOFF OFFICIAL BOTH DOWNPLAYED IMPORTANCE OF LOS MONJES DISPUTE AND AGREED ISLANDS UNQUESTIONABLY BELONG VENEZUELA.
2. COLOMBIAN CHARGE TOLD EMBOFF THAT GOC HAD AGREED SOME YEARS AGO LOS MONJES VENEZUELAN, AND SAID GOC NOT NOW CLAIMING ISLANDS. ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT COLOMBIA RETAINS ACTIVE INTEREST IN CONTINENTAL SHELF HALFWAY BETWEEN LOS MONJES ISLANDS AND GUAJIRA PENINSULA. HE SAID THIS PORTION OF CONTINENTAL SHELF MAY HAVE PETROLEUM POSSIBILITIES.
3. FONOFF OFFICIAL SAID ACTION TAKEN BY COLOMBIAN CONGRESS "HASTY AND ILL-CONSIDERED" BUT "WITHOUT IMPORTANCE." CONFIRMED THAT COLOMBIA HAD FORMALLY CONCEDED VEN SOVEREIGNTY OVER ISLANDS IN 1952 DIPLOMATIC NOTE.

COMMENT: COLOMBIAN RECOGNITION IN PRIVATE OF VENEZUELAN SOVEREIGNTY OVER LOS MONJES, SUPPLEMENTED BY CONCILIATORY STATEMENT MADE BY PRESIDENT LLERAS ON NOV 4 AND REPORTED BY PRESS HERE NOV 5, SHOULD TERMINATE FOR TIME BEING

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BRIEF FLURRY OF INTEREST OVER ISLANDS.

BERBAUM

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